

Washed and Anointed: The Holy Sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation



Washed and Anointed: An Explanation of the holy Sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation

The liturgy of baptism as it is celebrated in the Orthodox Church is very ancient, most of it composed no later than the 4th century, more than 1600 years ago. It is comprised of two parts: the Service for the Making of a Catechumen and the Sacrament of Baptism/Chrismation.

The Service for the Making of a Catechumen

The word “catechumen” is an ancient Greek word that means “one who is learning the faith.” A Christian is someone always learning their faith, always seeking to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). This initial service takes place in the entryway or narthex of the Church and marks the *official entrance*, so to speak, of a new Christian into the life of the Church.

The opening prayers of this service are in fact exorcisms, prayers of confrontation with our only real enemy, the Devil, whom we are called on by the Scriptures to resist (1 Peter 5:8-9). The prayers of exorcism proclaim the reality of evil and the power of God to overcome it, announcing the forthcoming baptism to be a victory in the war against sin and death.

After these prayers, the Godparents, on behalf of their Godchild, are asked a very specific question: “Do you renounce Satan and all of his works?” Their response: “I do renounce him!” The first act of the Christian life is a renunciation, a challenge, and a confrontation with the face of evil. The priest continues, bluntly asking: “Do you unite yourself to Christ?” Their response: “I do unite myself to Christ!” It is this double movement – the renunciation of Satan and the acceptance of Christ – that forms the nucleus of baptismal commitment. It is not enough to turn our backs to evil. We must also *turn to Christ* and orient our entire life towards Him. As a sign of commitment to Christ, the Godparents confess their faith by saying the Creed, a brief summary of Christian belief in the living God articulated at the first two Ecumenical Councils of the Church in the 4th century.

Then the congregation processes into the Church and goes up to the baptismal font while the priest sings a verse from the Scriptures: “Blessed is our God who desires that all people should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” (*1 Timothy 2:3-4*).

The Sacrament of Baptism/Chrismation

The sacrament of baptism begins with prayers for the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the water contained in the baptismal font, that it become for the child about to be baptized like the waters of the Jordan River in which the Lord Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist.

Pure olive oil offered by the child’s Godparents is blessed in a prayer that mentions the dove that brought Noah a twig of olive in its beak as a sign of reconciliation and deliverance from the great flood (*Genesis 8:8-11*) that is described as a pre-figuration and symbol of baptism in 1 Peter 3:20-21. Poured into the hands of the child’s Godparents, the priest anoints the child’s ears, hands, feet as a sign that the child belongs to Christ, the Messiah or “the Anointed One of God” and praying that he/she will hear the word of God, always walking in the Lord’s commandments.

Orthodox Christians, following the command of the risen Lord given to the apostles just before His ascension into heaven, baptize “in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (*Matthew 28:19*). Immersed in the waters of the baptismal font three times, the child is washed in “the living water” promised by Jesus, “a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (*John 4:10, 14*).

Immediately after being baptized, the child is placed in the arms of its Godmother or Godfather who, with the rest of the family, takes and dresses his/her Godchild in a white robe, the robe of martyrdom, a reminder of the persecution that Christians have endured through the centuries (*Revelation 6:11*).

During the dressing of the child, Psalm 32 is sung, celebrating the gift of the forgiveness of sins given in baptism and “the Lord’s unfailing love” for those “who trust in Him” (*Psalm 32:10*).

Chrismation, like baptism, is a sacrament of the Church. It is an

anointing with a special oil called chrism or myrrh, made of olive oil mixed with various spices and perfumes, the recipe for which is given in Exodus 30: 22-25. It is an oil of consecration for holiness. It is our personal Pentecost. It is, as the priest proclaims during the service, “the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit” that the Apostle Paul writes about in 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 and Ephesians 1:13-14. It is the seal of ownership that marks out the slaves of God as belonging to Him (*Revelation 7:3*). As the celebrating priest anoints the child, each time he says “the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit,” the entire congregation responds by saying “Amen!”

After the sacrament of chrismation, there is a procession of clergy, parents and Godparents around the baptismal font during which Galatians 3:27 is sung: “All those who have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia!” Candles are carried as a reminder that Christ is “the light of the world (*John 12:46*) and that Christians are a people who “belong to the light” (*Ephesians 5:8*). Incense, an ancient symbol of worship and the prayers of the saints, is also offered during the procession (*Exodus 30:7-8* and *Revelation 8:3-4*).

The epistle and gospel readings for the baptismal service are Romans 6:3-11 and Matthew 28:16-20. In this section of his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul briefly outlines his understanding of baptism as participation in the death and resurrection of Christ “that we should no longer be slaves to sin” and that baptized Christians should count themselves “dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” The account from Matthew’s Gospel is the giving of the great commission to the apostles, sending them out to share the gospel with peoples of all nations, to baptize them in “the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” and to teach obedience to Christ’s commands.

Prayers for faithfulness, throughout life, to the gifts of grace given in Baptism and Chrismation are then offered by the celebrating priest, who prays that as the child “goes forward to the prime of life and even the gray hairs of old age,” he/she may always worship and praise the one, true and living God.

The cutting of the hair (or tonsure) of the newly baptized by the celebrating priest is drawn from military practice. In the ancient Roman world, as is still the case today, one of the first things that happens to a person who enters the military is the receiving of a haircut. This imagery is drawn from Ephesians 6:10-17. Christians are “on duty” – so to speak – in service to Christ and His kingdom.

Finally, the baptismal cross is placed around the neck of the child by its Godparents while the priest quotes the Scriptures once again: “The Lord said, ‘Whoever would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me’ (*Matthew 16:24*).” The service then concludes with a final prayer for the dismissal of the newly baptized child, its parents and Godparents.



INFANT BAPTISM

It's BIBLICAL, TRADITIONAL, AND DOWNRIGHT ADORABLE.

Making of a Catechumen

Prayers at the Making of a Catechumen

With the congregation gathered in the Narthex, the Priest breathes three times on his [her] face and signing him [her] with the Cross three times, the Priest says:

Priest: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Priest: Blessed is our God always, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

The Priest places his right hand upon his [her] head:

Priest: In Your Name, O Lord God of Truth, and in the Name of Your Only-Begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ and Your Holy Spirit, I lay my hand upon this, Your servant *[Name]*, who has been accounted worthy to take refuge in Your Holy Name and to seek shelter beneath the shadow of Your wings. Remove from him *[her]* that ancient error, and fill him *[her]* with faith in You, with hope and with love, that he *[she]* may know that You alone are the True God, and Your Only-Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and Your Holy Spirit. Grant that he *[she]* may walk in all of Your commandments, and observe everything that is acceptable to You; for if anyone does what is pleasing

to You, he *[she]* shall find life. Write him *[her]* into Your Book of Life and unite him *[her]* to the flock of Your inheritance. Let Your holy Name and that of Your well-beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and Your life creating Spirit be glorified in him *[her]*. May You always look upon him *[her]* in mercy, and be ever attentive to the voice of his *[her]* prayer. May he *[she]* always rejoice in the works of his *[her]* hands, and in all of his *[her]* generation, that he *[she]* may confess You, worshipping and glorifying Your great and Most High Name, praising You ceaselessly all the days of his *[her]* life.

For all the Powers of Heaven sing Your praises, and Yours is the glory, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

The First Exorcism

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: The Lord condemns you, O Devil; the Lord Who came into the world and dwelt among us so that He might cast down your tyranny, and deliver the human race; the Lord Who upon the Tree of the Cross triumphed over the opposing powers, on that day when the sun went dark, and the earth trembled, and the tombs were opened, and the bodies of the saints arose; the Lord Who by His death destroyed death, and conquered him that held the power of death - that is you, O Devil. I command you by the Name of the Living God, Who revealed the Tree of Life, and posted the Cherubim and the flaming sword that turns this

way and that to guard it: be rebuked and depart! I command you, by the power of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Who walked upon the waves of the sea as if they were dry land, Who forbade the storm of the winds, Whose gaze dries up the deep and Whose threats melt mountains; for it is the Lord Jesus Who now forbids you through us. Be afraid and depart, and withdraw from this child, who is His creation, and do not come back. Do not hide in him *[her]*, do not confront him *[her]*, nor seek to influence him *[her]*, whether at night or during the day, in the morning or at noon; but go back to your own Tartarus, until the appointed day of Judgment. Fear God, Who sits upon the throne of the Cherubim and looks over the abyss, before Whom tremble Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Principalities, Authorities, Powers, the many-eyed Cherubim, and the six-winged Seraphim; Whom Heaven and earth fear, the sea and all that lives in it. Fear God Who makes Angels His messengers and His Ministers a flame of fire. Come out and depart from this child which He fashioned; depart from him *[her]*, together with all your power and might.

For glorified is the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

The Second Exorcism

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: O God, You are holy, fearful and glorious, and in all Your works and power, You are incomprehensible and mysterious. You have ordained for the Devil the

retribution of eternal torment. Through us, His unworthy servants, He commands you and all of your cooperating powers to depart from him *[her]* who is newly sealed in the Name of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. Therefore, every spirit that is evil, unclean, vile, loathsome and alien, I command you by the power of Jesus Christ, Who has all authority in Heaven and on earth, Who said to the deaf and dumb demon, “Come out of the man, and never enter into him again” – depart and acknowledge the futility of your power, which had no authority even over swine! Remember the Lord Who ordered you, in accordance with your own request, to enter into the herd of swine. Fear God, at Whose command the earth was established upon the waters; Who has founded the Heavens, and fixed the mountains with a line, and the valleys with a measure; Who has placed sand for a boundary to the sea and made safe paths through stormy waters; Who touches mountains and they smoke; Who clothes Himself with light as with a garment; Who stretches out the Heavens like a tent; Who covers His upper rooms with waters; Who has established the earth on a firm foundation, so that it shall not be shaken from age to age; Who calls up water out of the seas, and sprinkles it over the face of the earth. Come out! Depart from him *[her]* who is now being made ready for holy Illumination. I command you by the saving Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, by His Precious Blood and All-Pure Body, and by His dread and fearful Second Coming – for He will come and He will not delay, and on that great day He will judge all the earth, and He will punish you and all of the evil powers that cooperate with you, in the Gehenna of fire, handing you over to the outer darkness where the worm never dies and the fire is never quenched.

For the power is Christ our God's, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

The Third Exorcism

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: O Lord of *Sabaoth*, the God of Israel, Who heals every sickness and every infirmity, look upon Your servant *[Name]*; search out his *[her]* heart and probe him *[her]*, driving away from him *[her]* every work of the Evil One. Rebuke the unclean spirits and expel them, cleansing the work of Your hands; and using Your mighty power, crush Satan and place him beneath his *[her]* feet, granting him *[her]* victory over the Devil and all of his unclean spirits; so that, having obtained mercy from you, he *[she]* may be deemed worthy to receive Your immortal and heavenly Mysteries and may offer up all glory to You: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: O Sovereign Master and Lord, the I AM, You made humanity in Your own image and likeness and gave us the power of eternal life; but when the human race had fallen through sin, You did not abandon us. Through the Incarnation of Your Christ, You planned the salvation of the world. Having redeemed Your servant

[Name], whom You created, from the yoke of slavery to the Enemy, receive him *[her]* into Your heavenly Kingdom. Open the eyes of his *[her]* understanding that the light of Your Gospel may dawn upon him *[her]*. Yoke unto his *[her]* life a radiant Angel to deliver him *[her]* from every plot directed against him *[her]* by the Adversary, from every encounter with evil, from the noon-day demon, and from evil dreams.

And the Priest breathes on him [her] saying:

Drive out from him *[her]* every evil and unclean spirit, hiding and lurking in his *[her]* heart. *[3times]*

Drive away from him *[her]* the spirit of error, the spirit of evil, the spirit of idolatry, and of all greed that works according to the teaching of the Devil. Make him *[her]* a reason-endowed sheep of the holy Flock of Your Christ, an honorable member of Your Church, a holy vessel, a child of Light, and an heir of Your Kingdom. Having ordered his *[her]* life according to Your commandments and having guarded the Seal and kept it unbroken, and having preserved his *[her]* baptismal garment unstained, may he *[she]* attain unto the blessedness of the Saints in Your Kingdom.

By the grace, compassion and love for humankind of Your Only-Begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom You are blessed, together with Your all-holy, good and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Then the Priest turns him [her] who is to be baptized to face towards the west and asks the following questions three times. (If the person to be baptized is a child, the Sponsor holding him [her] faces west.)

Renouncing Satan and Evil

Priest: Do you renounce Satan, and all of his works and all of his worship and all of his angels and all of his pomp? *[3 times]*

Catechumen/Sponsor: I do renounce him. *[3 times]*

Priest: Have you renounced Satan? *[3 times]*

Catechumen/Sponsor: I have renounced him. *[3 times]*

Priest: Then blow and spit on him.

After this has been done the Priest turns the Catechumen to the East, facing the altar, and repeats the following questions three times.

Joining Christ and His Body, the Church

Priest: Do you join Christ? *[3 times]*

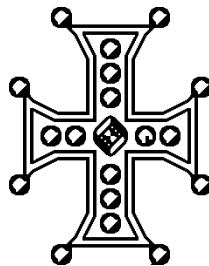
Catechumen/Sponsor: I do join Him. *[3 times]*

Priest: Have you joined Christ? *[3 times]*

Catechumen/Sponsor: I have joined Him. *[3 times]*

Priest: And do you believe in Him?

Catechumen/Sponsor: I believe in Him as my King and my God.



The Creed

Catechumen/Sponsor: I believe in one God, Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages;

Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not created, of one essence with the Father through Whom all things were made.

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man.

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried;

And He rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father;

And He will come again with glory to judge the living and dead. His kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Creator of life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke through the prophets.

In one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come. Amen.

Priest: Have you joined Christ? *[3 times]*

Catechumen/Sponsor: I have joined Him *[3 times]*

Priest: Then bow before Him and worship Him.

Catechumen/Sponsor: I bow down before the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; the Trinity One in Essence and undivided.

Priest: Blessed is our God, Who desires that all people should be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth, now and forever and to the ages of ages. *(1 Timothy 2:4)*

People: Amen.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Sovereign Master, Lord our God, call this Your servant *[Name]* to Your holy Illumination and deem him *[her]* worthy of the great grace of Your holy Baptism. Put off from him *[her]* all that is old and corrupt, and renew him *[her]* unto everlasting life; fill him *[her]* with the power of Your Holy Spirit, that he *[she]* may be united to Your Christ; that he *[she]* may no longer be a child of this fallen world, but a child of Your Kingdom;

By the good pleasure and grace of Your Only-Begotten Son, with Whom You are blessed, together with Your all-holy, good and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.



The Order of Holy Baptism

The Priest and people enter the Church. The Priest and those who will participate in the Baptism proceed to the baptismal Font and begin the service.

Priest: Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

The people respond “Lord have mercy” to the following petitions by the Deacon.

Deacon: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the peace of God and salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For peace in the whole world, for the stability of the holy Churches of God and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For this holy house and for those who enter it with faith, reverence and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For our Archbishop *[Name]*, the honorable Presbyters, the Deacons in the service of Christ and for all the clergy and laity, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For this water, that it may be made holy by the power, action and descent of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For this water, that there may come down upon it the grace of redemption, the blessing of the Jordan River; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That there may come down upon this water the cleansing action of the Trinity beyond Being; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For our illumination by the descent of the Holy Spirit with the Light of knowledge and reverence; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For this water, that it may prove able to turn away every plot of visible and invisible enemies; let us pray to the Lord

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For he *[she]* who is about to be baptized in these waters, that he *[she]* may become worthy of the incorruptible Kingdom of God; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the servant of God *[Name]* who now comes to holy Illumination, and for his *[her]* salvation; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the servant of God *[Name]*, that he *[she]* may prove to be a child of Light and an inheritor of eternal blessings; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the servant of God *[Name]*, that he *[she]* may be rooted in and become a participant in the death and resurrection of Christ our God, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the servant of God *[Name]*, that he *[she]* may preserve the garment of Baptism and the pledge of the Holy Spirit pure and undefiled on that great and dread Day of the judgment of Christ our God; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For this water, that it may be for him *[her]* a

washing of rebirth for the remission of sins and the putting on of a garment of incorruption; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That the Lord our God may listen to the voice of our prayer; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For both his *[her]* and our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger and distress; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Help us, save us, have mercy upon us and protect us O God, by Your Grace.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Commemorating our all-holy, pure, blessed and glorious Lady, the *Theotokos* and ever-Virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.

People: To You, O Lord.

While the Deacon prays the petitions above, the following prayer is said quietly by the Priest.

Priest: O compassionate and merciful God, You test minds and hearts and it is You alone who knows the secrets of men, for no deed is hidden from You, but everything is exposed and laid bare in Your sight: Lord, You know all about me. Do not scorn me nor turn Your face away from me, but overlook my offenses at this hour, for You overlook the sins of men when they repent. Wash away the filth of my body and any stain on my soul and sanctify me completely

by the spiritual Power of Your right hand, lest even as I preach freedom and offer it to others in the perfect faith of Your unspeakable love for humankind, I may be condemned as a slave of sin. O Sovereign Master, You alone are good and loving: do not let me be turned away in humiliation and put to shame. I beg You: in Your mercy send forth upon me Your Power from on High and give me the strength to administer this great and most heavenly Mystery.

The prayer continues and the following is said aloud by the Priest.

O Lord and Master, loving God, form the Image of Your Christ in him *[her]* who is about to be born again of water and the Spirit. Build him *[her]* upon the foundation of Your Apostles and Prophets, never to be torn down. Plant him *[her]* as a newly planted sapling of truth in the garden of Your holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, never to be uprooted; and by his *[her]* continually growing in faith and godliness all the days of his *[her]* life, may Your Most Holy Name be glorified: of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

The Blessing of the Baptismal Waters

Priest: GREAT ARE YOU, O LORD AND WONDROUS ARE YOUR WORKS, AND NO WORDS WILL SUFFICE TO SING THE PRAISES OF YOUR WONDERS. [3 times]

For by Your will have You brought all things into being out of nothing; and by Your power You sustain all creation; and by Your Providence You direct the

world. You shaped creation from the elements and have crowned the cycle of the year with four seasons. All the spiritual powers tremble before You; the sun praises You; the moon glorifies You; the stars come together and entreat You; light obeys You; the abyss shudders at Your presence; springs of water serve You; You have stretched out the Heavens like a curtain; You established the earth in the midst of the waters; You gave boundaries to the sea with sand; You poured forth the air for all living things to breathe; Angelic Powers minister before You; Choirs of Archangels worship You; the many-eyed Cherubim and the six-winged Seraphim, as they stand and fly around You, veil themselves with fear of Your unapproachable Glory. For though You are God, being completely boundless and without beginning, the One Whom no words can ever adequately describe, You came to earth and dwelt among us, taking the form of a slave and being made in the likeness of humanity; for You, O Master, in the tenderness of Your mercy, could not endure that the human race suffer under the tyranny of the devil, but You came and saved us. We confess Your grace; we proclaim Your mercy; we do not conceal Your wondrous benevolence! You have set human nature free, one generation after another; You made the virginal womb of the *Theotokos* holy by Your birth. All creation praises You, for You have made Yourself known to us; You were seen upon the earth, and lived among us. You made holy the streams of the Jordan River, sending down from the Heavens Your Holy Spirit and crushed the heads of dragons that lurked therein.

O LOVING KING, BE PRESENT NOW ALSO THROUGH THE DESCENT OF YOUR HOLY SPIRIT AND MAKE THIS WATER HOLY. [3 times]

And grant to these waters in the baptismal Font the grace of redemption and the blessing of the Jordan River. Make these waters a fountain of immortality, a gift of sanctification, deliverance from sins and the destruction of demons. Make these waters unapproachable by demonic powers and filled with angelic might. Let those who conspire against Your creation flee before him *[her]* for I have called upon Your Holy Name, O Lord – a Name that is wonderful and glorious, but fearful unto enemies.

And the Priest signs the water three times in the shape of the Cross, and dipping his fingers into it and breathing upon it, he sings:

LET ALL ADVERSE POWERS BE CRUSHED BENEATH THE SIGN OF YOUR MOST PRECIOUS CROSS. *[3 times]*

We pray to You, O Lord, let every immaterial and invisible idol withdraw itself from us and do not let a demon of darkness conceal itself in these waters; do not allow an evil spirit to disturb the mind and darken the thoughts of the one who is about to be baptized by descending into the waters with him *[her]*. O Master of All, declare these waters to be the waters of redemption, the waters of holiness, a cleansing of flesh and spirit, the untying of bonds, forgiveness of transgressions, an illumination of soul, a washing of rebirth, a renewal of the spirit, the gift of adoption, a garment of incorruption and a fountain of life. For it was You, O Lord, who said: “Wash and be made clean; put away all that is evil from your souls.” *(Isaiah 1:16)* You have bestowed upon us rebirth from on high by water and the Spirit. O Lord, make Yourself known to us in these waters and grant that he *[she]* who is about to be baptized may be

transformed, putting off the old self that has been corrupted according to the deceitful lusts of this fallen world in order to be clothed with the new, and be renewed in accordance with the image of his *[her]* Creator; that being planted in the likeness of Your death through Baptism, O Christ, he *[she]* may become a sharer in Your Resurrection; and having guarded the gift of Your Holy Spirit and increasing the deposit of grace, he *[she]* may receive the prize of his *[her]* high calling and be numbered among the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven, in You our God and Lord Jesus Christ.

For to You belongs all glory, dominion, honor and worship, together with Your Father Who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

The Blessing of the Oil

The Priest breathes upon the Oil and makes the sign of the Cross over it three times while it is being held by the Godparent as an offering to God.

Priest: O Lord and Master, the God of our Fathers, You sent a dove bearing an olive twig in its beak to those in the Ark of Noah, as a sign of reconciliation and salvation from the Flood. Through these events You prefigured the Mystery of Grace. You filled those who were under the Law with the Holy Spirit and You bring those who are under grace to perfection: Lord, bless this olive oil by the power *[+]* action *[+]* and

descent of the Holy Spirit *[+]* that it may become an anointing of incorruption, a weapon of righteousness, a renewal of soul and body, driving away every assault of the Devil and delivering from all evil those who are anointed with it in faith, or who partake of it.

To Your glory and that of Your Only-Begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ and Your all-holy, good and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Deacon: Let us be attentive

The Priest then pours the blessed Oil in a crosswise pattern upon the water in the baptismal Font three times and the people respond by singing:

People: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

Priest: Blessed is God Who enlightens and sanctifies everyone who comes into the world, now and forever and to the ages of ages. *(John 1:9)*

People: Amen.

The Priest pours some of the blessed Oil into the cupped hands of the Godparent. He then takes the blessed Oil and makes the sign of the Cross on the child's forehead, ears, breast, hands, feet, and between his [her] shoulders saying:

Priest: The servant of God *[Name]* is anointed with the Oil of gladness, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

The Priest signs his [her] breast as well as between

his [her] shoulders saying:

Priest: For healing of soul and body. (*Psalm 41:4*)

...and on the ears saying:

Priest: For the hearing of Faith. (*Galatians 3:2*)

...and on the feet, saying:

Priest: That he [*she*] may walk in the paths of Your commandments. (*Psalm 119:35*)

...and on the hands saying:

Priest: Your hands, O Lord, have made me and fashioned me. (*Psalm 119:73*)

The Baptism

The congregation stands reverently. After the Godparent has anointed the whole body of the child with the blessed Oil, the Priest baptizes him [her], holding him [her] erect and facing towards the East saying:

Priest: The servant of God [*Name*] is baptized in the Name of the Father.

People: Amen.

Priest: And of the Son.

People: Amen.

Priest: And of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

At each invocation, the Priest immerses him [her] and lifts him [her] up out of the water again. After the child has been baptized in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit as Christ commanded

(Matthew 28:19), the Priest places him [her] in a towel and white linen sheet held by the Godparent; and the child is taken to be dressed.

Psalm 32 (Chanted)

Chanter: Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Alleluia. *[3 times]* Blessed are those whose sin the Lord does not count against them and in whose mouth there is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones grew old from my groaning all day long; for day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; I became miserable when the thorn pierced me. Then I confessed my sin to You and I did not hide my transgressions; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.” And you forgave the ungodliness of my heart. For this reason, let everyone who is holy pray to Him in due season; surely they will not draw near to Him in a flood of many waters. You are my refuge from the affliction that surrounds me; O my exceeding joy, redeem me from those who encircle me. “I will give you understanding and I will teach you in the way you should walk; I will fix My eyes on you. Do not be like the horse and the mule, which have no understanding; you must constrain their jaws with bit and bridle, so that they do not come near you.” Many are the scourges of the sinner, but he who hopes in the Lord, shall be encircled by His mercy. Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous; and all you who are righteous in heart sing to Him.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

*The Prayer of Chrismation
for the Seal and Gift of the Holy Spirit*

Priest: Blessed are You, O Lord God Almighty for You are the source of all good things and the Sun of Righteousness: You made the Light of salvation shine forth for those in darkness by the manifestation of Your Only-Begotten Son and our God. You granted us, even though we are unworthy, the grace of blessed cleansing in holy Baptism and divine sanctification by the life-giving Anointing. You have now also been well-pleased to grant rebirth to this, Your servant, newly illumined through water and the Spirit, giving him *[her]* forgiveness of his *[her]* voluntary and involuntary sins: O Sovereign Master and compassionate King of All, bestow upon him *[her]* also the gift of the Seal of Your all-powerful and adorable Holy Spirit and Communion in the holy Body and most precious Blood of Your Christ. Keep him *[her]* in Your holiness; confirm him *[her]* in the Orthodox Faith; deliver him *[her]* from the Evil One and all his snares; by a saving fear of You, preserve his *[her]* soul in purity and righteousness that in every work and word, he *[she]* may be acceptable to You and so become a child and an heir of Your heavenly Kingdom.

For You are our God, the God of mercy and salvation, and to You do we offer up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

After the Prayer of Chrismation above, if the child has not yet been dressed in new baptismal clothes and brought back out, it is customary to sing the canon of

hymns for the feast of the Cross.

When the child has been dressed and returns to the Service, the Priest anoints the newly baptized servant of God with holy Chrism, marking the person with the sign of the Cross, on the face, the ears, the breast, the hands, and the feet. At each anointing and sealing, he says:

Priest: The Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit!

People: Amen!



The Priest blesses the new clothing of the baptized saying:

Priest: The servant of God *[Name]* is clothed with the garment of righteousness, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

The following hymn is then sung by the chanter in the 8th Tone

Chanter: Grant me a garment of Light, O most merciful Christ our God, You Who clothe Yourself with Light as with a garment.

Then the Godparent, holding the child, stands behind the baptismal Font facing the Priest, with the parents standing on either side, all holding lit candles. The Priest begins censing and together with the Godparent and the child, circle the Font three times, pausing at

each arm of the cross; and for each of the three rounds, the Chanter sings the following hymn taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 3:27 with the Priest.

The Hymn of Baptism

Chanter: Those who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia. *[3 times]*

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; both now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen. Have put on Christ. Alleluia.

Deacon: Δύναμις. *(Again, singing fervently and with power.)*

Chanter: Those who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia.

The Reading of the Epistle

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Reader: The Lord is my light and my salvation; of whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid? *(Psalm 27:1)*

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from the Letter of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans *(Romans 6:3-11)*

Deacon: Let us listen attentively!

Reader: Brethren, do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life; for if we have been united with Him

in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body, ruled by sin, might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For he who has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. For we know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. The death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Priest: Peace be to you, the reader.

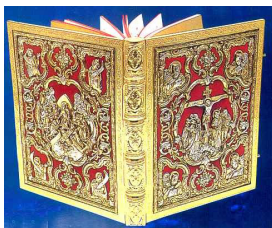
People: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Chanter: I will love You, O Lord, for You are my strength, my rock, my fortress and my Savior. (*Psalm 18:1*)

People: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Chanter: My God, You are my strength in Whom I will trust. (*Psalm 18:2*)

People: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.



The Reading of the Gospel

Deacon: Wisdom! Arise! Let us hear the holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be with you all!

Chanter: And with your spirit

Deacon: The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (*Matthew 28:16-20*)

Priest: Let us be attentive!

Chanter: Glory to You, O Lord; glory to You.

Deacon: At that time, the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw Him they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.”

Chanter: Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

The Prayers of Ablution (Washing)

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Having redeemed Your servant [*Name*] from his [*her*] sins through baptism, You have bestowed upon him [*her*] a life of rebirth: O Master and Lord, may it please You that the Light of Your Face might forevermore shine in his [*her*] heart; maintain the shield of his [*her*] faith against the plotting of enemies; preserve the garment of immortality in which he [*she*] has been clothed this day undefiled and unstained; by Your grace preserve in him [*her*] the Seal of Your Spirit; and in the abundance of Your tender mercies, be

gracious to us and to him *[her]*.

For blessed and glorified is Your most-honorable and majestic Name, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Sovereign Master, Lord our God: through the baptismal font You bestow heavenly illumination upon all those who are baptized; You have granted rebirth to this Your servant *[Name]*, granting him *[her]* forgiveness of his *[her]* voluntary and involuntary sins; lay Your mighty hand upon him *[her]* and guard him *[her]* by the power of Your goodness. Preserve inviolate his *[her]* pledge of Faith in You. Deem him *[her]* worthy of eternal life and Your favor.

For You are our sanctification and to You do we offer up glory; to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Deacon: Let us bow our heads to the Lord.

People: To You, O Lord.

Priest: Together with us, O Christ our God, he *[she]* who has been clothed with You in baptism bows his *[her]* head before You; always protect him *[her]*; make him *[her]* an invincible warrior against those who in vain bear enmity against him *[her]* and against us; and by Your incorruptible crown, on that great Day of Your judgment, declare us all to be victorious, remaining faithful to You until the end.

For it is Yours to have mercy on us and to save us; and to You do we offer up glory, together with Your Father Who is without beginning, and Your all-holy, good and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

The Priest, dipping the edge of a towel or a sponge in clean water, applies it to those places where the child has been anointed with holy Chrism, saying:

Priest: *[Name]*, you have been baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. You have been justified and illumined; you have been anointed with holy Chrism; you have been made holy and washed clean, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.



The Prayers of Tonsure

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Sovereign Master, Lord our God, You honored humanity by creating us in Your own Image, providing a reason-endowed soul and a beautiful body, so that the body might serve the reason-endowed soul; for You placed our head at the very top of the body and in it You planted the majority of the senses—sight, hearing, taste and smell—which do not interfere with one another

but complement one another. You covered the head with hair so as not be harmed by changes of weather; and You fit together all the limbs of our bodies in the most suitable way, so that through them all we might give thanks unto You, the Master Craftsman. O Sovereign Master, by Your chosen instrument, Paul the Apostle, You commanded us to do all things to Your glory: bless *[+]* this Your servant *[Name]*, who has now come to make his *[her]* first offering to You by the cutting of hair from his *[her]* head; and bless his *[her]* Godparent *[+]*; and his *[her]* parents, granting them in all things to be diligent in the study of Your Law, always following Your commandments and doing everything that is well-pleasing in Your sight;

For You are a merciful and loving God and to You do we offer up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Priest: Peace be with you all *[+]*

People: And with your spirit.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

The Priest lays his right hand upon the head of the newly baptized child, blessing him [her] and says:

Priest: O Lord our God, through the fullness of the baptismal Font, You have, by Your loving kindness, sanctified those who believe in You: Bless this child here present; may Your blessings come down upon

his *[her]* head; as You blessed the head of Your servant David the King by the hand of the Prophet Samuel, *[+]* so also bless the head of this Your servant *[Name]*, by my unworthy hand, visiting him *[her]* with Your Holy Spirit, that as he *[she]* goes forward to the prime of his *[her]* life and even the grey hairs of old age, he *[she]* may offer up glory to You, and behold the good things of Jerusalem all the days of his *[her]* life.

For to You belongs all glory, honor and worship, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

The Priest then cuts his [her] hair in the form of a Cross, snipping off four locks of hair in front, back and over each ear, saying:

Priest: The servant of God *[Name]* is tonsured in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

The Closing Petitions

Deacon: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Your great mercy, we pray to You hear us and have mercy.

People: Lord, have mercy *[3 times]*

Deacon: Again let us pray for mercy, life, peace, health and salvation for the servants of God, the newly baptized and illumined *[Name]*, his *[her]* Godparents, parents and grandparents; and all those who have come together for

the celebration of this holy Sacrament.

People: Lord, have mercy [*3 times*]

Priest: For You are a merciful and loving God and to You do we offer up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

The Priest then blesses the baptismal Cross in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The Godparent presents the child to its parents and receiving the baptismal Cross from the Priest, places it around the neck of his [her] Godchild as the Priest says:

The Lord said, “Whoever would follow Me, let him deny himself, take up his Cross and follow Me.”

- (*Matthew 16:24*)

The Dismissal

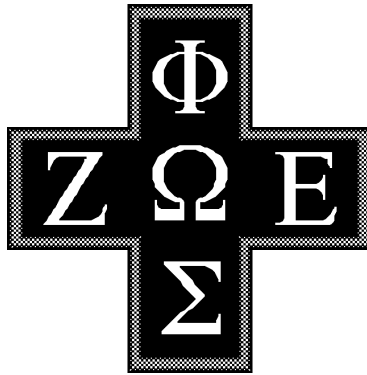
Priest: Glory to You, O Christ our God and our hope; glory to You.

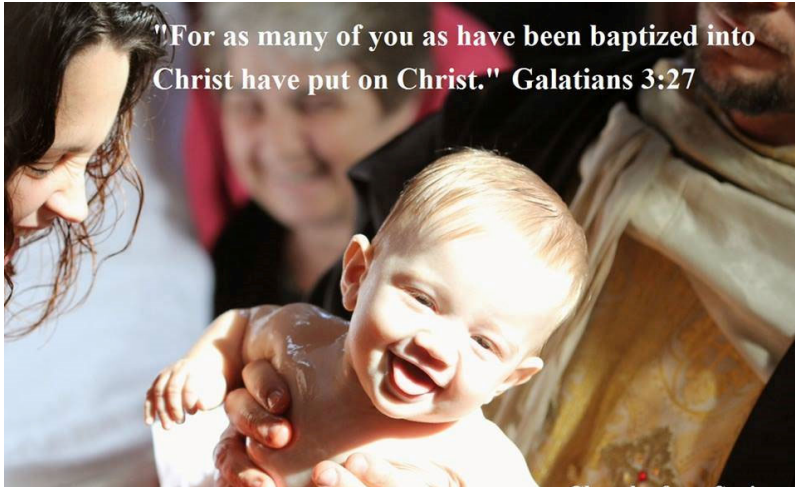
May Christ our true God, Who condescended to be baptized in the River Jordan by the prophet and forerunner John the Baptist for our salvation, have mercy on us and save us – by the intercessions of His most-pure and holy Mother, the *Theotokos* and ever-virgin Mary; by the prayers of the holy and glorious prophet and forerunner John the Baptist; the prayers of the holy, glorious and all-praiseworthy Apostles, especially St. Paul the Apostle; of [*the name of the saint whose name the child has received*], and of all Your

saints;

Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.

People: Amen.

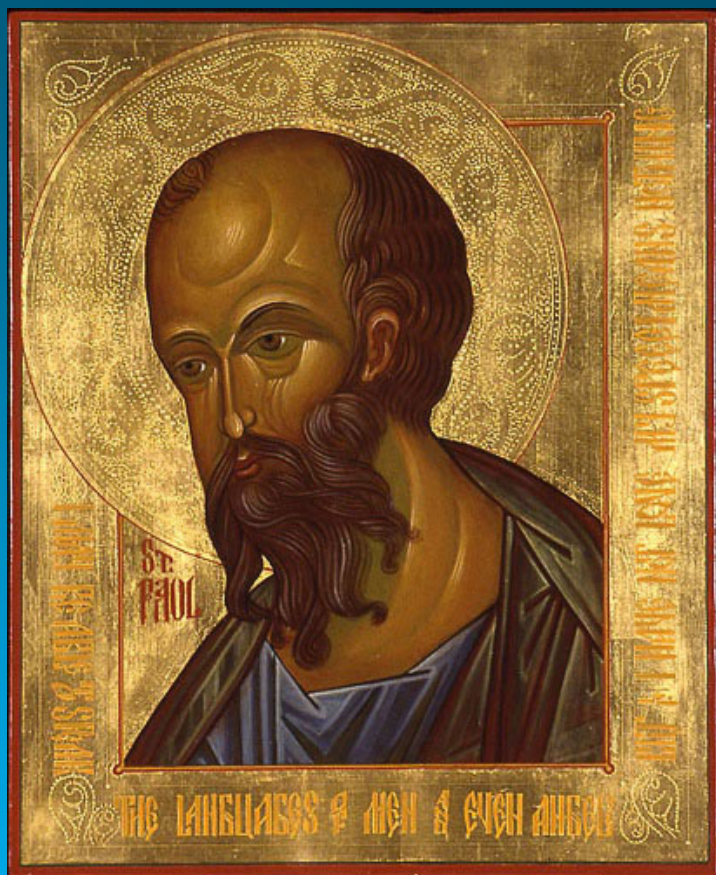




Our belonging, our loyalty to anything in “this world” - be it the State, nation, family, culture or any other “value” - is valid only inasmuch as it does not contradict or mutilate our primary loyalty to the Kingdom of Christ. We belong to this Kingdom here and now and we belong to it and serve it before all other “kingdoms.” In the light of that Kingdom no other loyalty is absolute, no other loyalty can claim our unconditional obedience, no other loyalty is the 'lord' of our life.

To remember this is especially important now when not only the “world” but even Christians themselves so often absolutize their earthly values - national, ethnic, political and cultural - making them the criterion of their Christian faith, rather than subordinating them to the only absolute oath: the one they took on the day of their Baptism, when they were enrolled in the ranks of those for whom Christ is the only King and Lord.

- *Father Alexander Schmemmann (1921-1983)*



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